

West Woods Upper Elementary School

Curriculum Guide

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March 2005

Dear Parents,

The mission of West Woods Upper Elementary School is to challenge all students to meet high academic standards and to help them become responsible and caring community members. Each year, we continue to refine our school vision and move closer to our goal: to become a high performing school in the middle grades where “all students learn to use their minds well; where the standards are high for all students; where high quality teaching and challenging classes are offered to every child, along with extra help and support for those who need them; and where the unique challenges faced by young adolescents are respected and such needs are not seen as outside the school’s purview.” (*Turning Points 2000*) Another important goal for West Woods is to create a strong bridge between the elementary schools and the middle school and to provide careful transitions for students across levels. The faculty, administration, and staff of West Woods are committed to providing the following for every student:

- A rigorous core academic program, which challenges all students to meet high standards in all areas of the curriculum and where “the continual press for achievement is coupled with high standards of care.” (Anne Wheelock)
- Standards-based curriculum, which focuses on high achievement through an integrated and meaningful approach to learning and which solidifies skill acquisition in preparation for middle school.
- An environment which nurtures and supports students physically, emotionally, socially, and academically, and an organization and schedule which supports both the curriculum and the developmental needs of students.
- Small, personalized structures for learning—such as teams and tandems—which support close connections between teachers and students that foster student motivation, effort, and investment in schoolwork.
- Careful transitions in and out of the school, continuity and alignment of curriculum across levels, and graduated structures that change from grade five to grade six to support a smooth transition.

This booklet has been prepared to give parents and students an overview of the curriculum—the academic standards and the subject matter taught—at West Woods Upper Elementary School. Farmington has a strong, comprehensive, standards-based K-12 curriculum, which includes sequential instruction in language arts, social studies, science, mathematics, world languages, the arts, health, and physical education. This program of studies describes in brief the expectations, core subjects, and experiences that each student will meet in grades five and six.

Many supporting activities are planned for fourth and fifth grade students to help them transition to their new school or new grade, and this program of studies is a component of that process. In the early spring, parents will be invited to informational meetings about the West Woods curriculum, and parents and students will complete preliminary course selections for next year. Later in the spring, fourth graders will have an opportunity to visit West Woods and to hear more about their new school from administrators, teachers, and the guidance counselor; fifth graders will have a similar orientation to sixth grade at West Woods. Other activities will be scheduled for June, for late summer, and/or for early September to ensure a smooth transition for all students; parents and students will be informed of these activities as they unfold.

We hope that this curriculum guide adds to your understanding of the Farmington curriculum and encourages you to continue with us as partners in the education of your children. We look forward to your active involvement at West Woods next year.

Roberta Kurlantzick
Principal

Anne-Marie Sladewski
Assistant Principal

West Woods Upper Elementary School Mission

The mission of West Woods Upper Elementary School is to challenge all students to meet high academic standards and to help them become responsible and caring community members.

West Woods Guiding Beliefs

About Students

All students can learn at high levels.

All students should feel individually known, cared for, nurtured, and safe.

Every student should feel connected to at least one school adult.

Instruction should be challenging and engaging, relevant to the concerns of preadolescents and based on how they learn best. (*Turning Points 2000*)

About Outcomes

Students should understand that effort and strategic, hard work are the main determinants of school success.

Students should be respectful.

Students should be proficient readers, writers, and communicators.

Students should know how to ask good questions and find answers.

Students should be willing to take appropriate risks, accept challenges, and reflect on their academic and social growth.

About The Learning Community

The school is a community of learners, a partnership among teachers, students, and parents, which supports student learning and healthy development.

Student learning is our chief priority; improving our knowledge and skills is essential to raising student achievement.

Collaboration is essential to our success; working together strengthens us and enhances achievement.

The faculty and staff should understand and value each other's work and be respectful, flexible, open minded, and good-humored.

Farmington Board of Education Philosophy

The Farmington Public Schools are committed to the belief that all children are capable of attaining high levels of educational achievement in preparation for productive, rewarding lives and responsible citizenship. Students will reach this goal through their own diligence and effort, and through a school and school district learning climate that responds to individual student academic needs, a curriculum that challenges, adequate resources, and skilled, professional instruction. Furthermore, a belief in social equality underlies Farmington's commitment to providing a high quality of education for all students.

Farmington Board of Education Mission and Curriculum Standards

The mission of the Farmington Public Schools is to offer a common standards-based educational program that will enable every student to achieve rigorous performance standards.

The Farmington K-12 curriculum is standards-based in all content areas. In each subject, Farmington content standards define the skills, knowledge, and understandings we believe all students need to become fully functioning, well educated citizens. Our standards provide teachers, parents, and students with a vivid image of what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level, and the related assessments and benchmarks provide a clear understanding of what quality work looks like in each area. Students are assessed on their progress toward grade level standards in each content area.

Standards are important for many reasons. Standards promote achievement by giving focus to the work of students, teachers, and parents. Standards help teachers to identify clear goals for teaching, learning, and assessment. Standards help students to identify well-defined curricular targets and examples of high quality work, and this clarity, combined with support from teachers and parents, enhances student motivation and effort. Standards help parents to identify models of the work that is expected of students, thus enabling parents to better support student learning at home.

A broad overview of each content area is provided here, followed by a description of the fifth and sixth grade curriculum in that area. Complete copies of the essential understandings—big ideas, concepts or themes—and the content standards for each curriculum area are available through the West Woods School office.

Language Arts

*“The middle level school provides the last chance for educators to help students become proficient readers and writers.” (Judith Irvin, *Reading and the Middle School Student*.)*

The goal of the West Woods language arts program is to help students become skillful, confident, lifelong readers and writers, who use language effectively for communication, enjoyment, and pleasure. The program at West Woods addresses all components of language arts—reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing—and builds on and solidifies the skills learned in elementary school.

Students have reading instruction daily in both grades five and six. They continue to develop essential reading skills and strategies, read a wide variety of materials, and learn to apply reading skills more independently to progressively complex fiction and non-fiction texts. The goals of the writing program at West Woods are to help students master the writing process, communicate in a variety of writing forms, and incorporate the traits of good writing successfully into their writing pieces. Students have writing instruction daily and write for many purposes and audiences—to communicate ideas and feelings as well as information and opinions.

Grades Five and Six Reading

Students in grades five and six continue to expand their reading strategies and skills: in both grades they are expected to read increasingly complex texts and communicate comprehension orally and in writing with increasing levels of complexity and sophistication. Students in grade five and six continue to develop reading fluency, apply appropriate word recognition strategies, increase vocabulary, and learn and use key comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading.

Literature is a central component of the fifth and sixth grade reading program. Students read a wide variety of literature selections as well as several core texts in each grade, chosen to give all students common experiences with contemporary and classic literature. Students continue to develop comprehension strategies through literature study. They learn to express initial understandings and complex interpretations; to identify and infer relationships between characters, setting, and events; and to make personal and critical connections between texts and themselves. In fifth and sixth grade, students also read increasing amounts of non-fiction and informational text, in which they work to improve related comprehension skills such as identifying main ideas and relationships, locating and summarizing information, and drawing conclusions supported with text evidence.

Student progress toward grade level standards in reading is measured by common assessment tasks, a collection of writing in response to reading, and teacher observations of classroom reading. In both grades students meet the grade level reading standard by reading typical grade level texts (or selections) with appropriate accuracy and fluency. They show their understanding with appropriate oral responses during discussions and by adequately answering a range of

comprehension questions about the texts (selections) orally and in writing. In addition, each year students in both grades are expected to read 20 books representing a variety of fiction and non-fiction choices.

Grades Five and Six Reading Acceleration

Students who are making limited progress toward grade level reading standards are identified for participation in additional explicit, systematic small group strategic reading instruction designed to improve reading achievement. Acceleration instruction is tailored to student needs and emphasizes word recognition as well as literal and inferential comprehension of both fiction and non-fiction text.

Grades Five and Six Writing

Students in grades five and six continue to develop fluency with the writing process: brainstorming to discover a subject, using organizers to focus topics, and expanding and refining the use of the traits of good writing. These traits—focus, organization, elaboration, fluency, and conventions—define the writing skills that students are expected to acquire as they progress through the grades.

Students have daily opportunities to write for different audiences, for specific purposes, and in a variety of forms including personal and fictional narratives. The emphasis in grades five and six is on expository writing including (but not limited to): process/instruction, explanation, description, responses to literature, summaries, and persuasive and analytical essays.

Student progress toward grade level standards in writing is measured by a collection of work, which shows grade appropriate mastery of the writing traits: strong focus and well-established point of view; clear structure and organization including introductions and endings; relevant and accurate supporting details; and correct or reasonably correct application of conventions including spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage.

Mathematics

The goals of the mathematics program at West Woods are to help students value mathematics and become successful problem solvers and clear communicators of mathematical thinking. In grades five and six, students continue to develop mathematical proficiency through a range of instructional experiences. Assessment is multi-faceted (classwork, homework, journals, quizzes, projects, tests, performance assessments) and offers students a variety of ways to demonstrate mathematical understandings. Students have mathematics instruction daily, and technology is embedded in the mathematics program.

Grade Five Mathematics

In fifth grade, students continue to develop numerical understanding and to expand their understanding of spatial relationships and geometry, data collection and analysis, patterns, classification, and algebraic thinking. They further their understanding and application of the number system through the continued study of operations and through the study of fraction and decimal concepts. Students experience a problem solving approach to mathematics based on everyday situations.

Using the University of Chicago's *Everyday Mathematics Program*, sixth grade students learn to: recognize place value in numerals for whole numbers and decimals, express numbers in scientific notation; find factors of numbers; compare properties of prime and composite numbers; represent rates and ratios with fraction notation; extend whole-number facts with addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to fractions and decimals; evaluate symbolic expression; collect, organize, and analyze data using bar graphs, line graphs, circle graphs, and stem-and-leaf plots; investigate angles and rotations; calculate area and volume; draw to scale; explore relationships of two and three dimensional figures; explore transformations that affect geometric shapes; use measures of linear, area, and capacity; locate items with reference to an origin of zero point (ex: ordinal numbers, times of day, dates, and temperatures); determine divisibility; explore number patterns; apply formulas to geometric figures; create number models; work with square numbers; and explore variables in formulas.

Grade Six Mathematics

In sixth grade, students continue to develop numerical understanding and to expand their understanding of spatial relationships and geometry, data collection and analysis, patterns, classification, and algebraic thinking. They develop knowledge and understanding of mathematics that is rich in connections by engaging in a variety of problem solving situations.

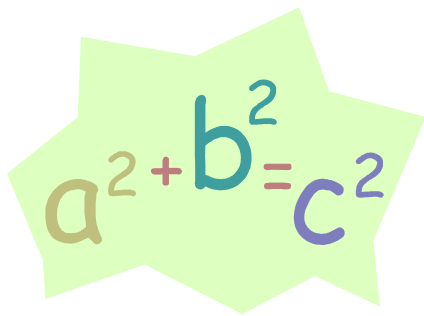
In grade six, students learn to: collect data, interpret and make frequency tables, line plots, bar graphs, stem-and-leaf plots and scatter plots, identify outliers, and calculate and interpret mean, median, mode, and range, investigate situations (taxes, discounts, circle graphs, buying land, portioning brownies, purchasing supplies, etc.) in which they need to add, subtract, multiply, or divide fractions, decimals, or percents, and understand when to use each operation; extend and improve the basic skills of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing with whole numbers,

decimals, fractions, and mixed numbers; extend and improve estimation skills; explore, extend and describe numeric and geometric patterns; define, classify, and describe polygons and angles, angle measurement, dimensions and symmetry; use measuring tools and application to real life problems to develop the concepts of area and perimeter; use formulas to calculate perimeter and area; and gain a conceptual understanding of probability and calculate experimental probabilities as fractions and percentages.

Pre-Algebra

Students are enrolled in pre-algebra based on classroom and placement test performance, along with teacher recommendation. Pre-algebra is a challenging program that is faster paced and more abstract than Math 6.

Students in sixth grade pre-algebra learn to: represent situations with algebraic expressions and use the distributive property to rewrite expressions; gain experience visualizing three-dimensional structures and explore surface area and volume; develop an understanding of exponents and scientific notation and develop a sense of large numbers; develop and apply algorithms for operations with signed numbers and extend their knowledge of coordinate graphs to include all four quadrants; investigate graphs, tables, and equations for linear relationships; simplify and solve basic equations; solve problems by using proportional thinking and write and interpret ratio and percent comparisons; create and interpret graphs, including graphs of reciprocal and quadratic relationships; and explore sampling techniques and investigate the probability concepts of fairness and independence.


$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

Science

The primary goal of the science program at West Woods is to develop scientific literacy. Specifically, the program is designed to help students acquire scientific knowledge and vocabulary, understand the scientific method, and appreciate the relevance of science to everyday life. In both grades five and six, students conduct guided inquiries which enable them to develop their skills of scientific observation, inference, data collection and organization, and communication. Performance assessments at the end of each science unit require students to demonstrate an understanding of science concepts and process.

Next year fifth grade and sixth grade units of study may change as the curriculum is realigned with the new Connecticut science framework.

Grade Five Science

In fifth grade students participate in three units of scientific study, each of which culminates in a performance assessment requiring them to apply newly learned scientific knowledge and investigative skills to solve or analyze a scientific problem.

In the first unit, *An Introduction to the Scientific Method—Measuring Time*, students investigate the history of timekeeping and explore a variety of timekeeping devices. They construct and experiment with sun clocks and sinking water clocks. Throughout the unit, students learn about the scientific method by manipulating variables and organizing information in charts and graphs. They also learn the value of repeating experiments, comparing results, and discussing findings with others.

In the *Ecosystems* unit, students observe models of land and water ecosystems. They investigate how organisms within an ecosystem are interdependent, and they learn to identify the roles of producers, consumers, and scavengers. In addition, students study human activities that impact on ecosystems and make connections between their model ecosystems and events in daily life.

In the *Simple Machines* unit, students study the concepts of force and work and investigate the use of simple machines in everyday life. They identify everyday examples of simple machines and conduct investigations to illustrate the advantages of different types of machines. As a culminating activity, students propose and explain the effectiveness of a simple machine design in the assessment “Grandma’s Move” when they help their grandmother’s movers get a refrigerator out of a second floor apartment and onto a moving van.

Grade Six Science

In sixth grade students participate in four units of scientific study. In the *Scientific Method* unit, students continue to practice the scientific method, to make detailed observations and inferences, and to communicate results in a laboratory report format.

In the *Diversity of Life* unit, students study the traits common to all living things, the structure of the biological classification system, and the main characteristics of eubacteria, archebacteria, protists, fungi, plants and animals. In the performance task, “Mystery Organism,” students demonstrate their knowledge of the classification system: they assume the role of a field biologist who has discovered a new species, explain the characteristics and life traits of a new species, and prove that it is truly a unique species.

In the *Solar System* unit, students explore the features and dynamics of objects in the solar system. They also study various types of celestial motions and compare the characteristics of different planets. In the “Outer Space Colonies” performance task, students demonstrate their understanding of planetary characteristics and life needs by taking the role of a planetary expert and creating a proposal for a successful colony on Mars or Venus.

In the unit on *Earth’s Changing Surface*, students study the processes of weathering, erosion, deposition, and soil fermentation. In the performance task, “Old Man of the Mountain,” students demonstrate their knowledge of natural forces acting on the land: they assume the role of a geologist expert who must explain to the residents of Franconia Notch, New Hampshire why the Old Man of the Mountain collapsed and if rebuilding it makes sense.

Social Studies

The primary goal of the social studies program at West Woods is to prepare students to function as effective citizens in a democratic society and a globally interdependent world. In both grades five and six, students expand their core knowledge of our nation's heritage, learn to understand and appreciate other cultures, and acquire important social science concepts and skills that will help them become lifelong learners and productive global citizens.

Grade Five Social Studies

The theme of fifth grade social studies is "Origins of the American Nation: Nineteenth Century—A Changing Nation—A Changing Culture." Students in fifth grade investigate four historical time periods—Westward Expansion, the Civil War Era, Immigration, and the Industrial Revolution—each of which provides an opportunity to explore the unique contributions of groups that shaped American culture. The study of Westward Expansion includes a focus on Hispanic and Native American cultural contributions. In the Civil War study, students explore African-American contributions and perspectives, and in the unit on Immigration and the Industrial Revolution, students examine the impact of Northern and Southern Europeans on American culture.

In fifth grade social studies, students learn about how our nation's past influences the present. They study the catalysts for and the consequences of Westward Expansion and the impact of this migration on Native American culture and the environment. They examine the causes of the American Civil War, the regional perspectives that led up to it, and the effects of the Civil War on American culture and the Constitution. In the Immigration Unit, students learn about the reasons for the increase in European immigration to America at the beginning of the nineteenth century and how that immigration affected the culture and economy of the United States. Finally, students look at the causes and effects of industrialization and its impact on our changing culture. Literature is integrated into social studies units, and common assessments measure student understandings of key concepts.

Grade Six Social Studies

The theme of sixth grade social studies is "Peoples and Cultures from Around the World." Specifically, students in sixth grade social studies study how the geography, economy, history, and culture of important areas of the modern world influence life in these regions. Students begin the sixth grade year with an in-depth study of "Global Interdependence," and this concept becomes the unifying theme for the year. Students examine the different ways that nations are connected to each other, and they develop a deeper understanding of their responsibilities as citizens of the global community. Subsequently, students explore Latin America and Africa: how the geography, economy, and history of these regions shaped the modern culture of the people who live there, and how these regions continue to shape and influence our lives and that of our nation.

Throughout sixth grade social studies, students learn and apply a variety of geography skills to their country/regional studies. They also examine key global issues that affect these regions, as well as possible solutions to important global problems. Library research, project work, culminating cultural festivals, and current events play an important role in the sixth grade social studies experience, and common assessment tasks measure student understanding of key concepts.



World Languages

The primary goal of the world languages program at West Woods is to help students understand that communicating in our world requires knowing, processing, and functioning in other languages. Students may choose to study either French or Spanish at West Woods. Instruction and language practice includes all of the world language skill areas—listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture. Students have world language class three days each week.

Grades Five and Six French

In grades five and six, students learn to communicate in French about a variety of topics and become familiar with some of the people and countries of the French-speaking world. Students learn about the cities of Poitiers, Quebec and Paris. Students are exposed to the language and culture of the people of these regions.

Using the text series *Allez-viens!* and its ancillary materials, instruction in French includes listening, speaking, reading and writing in age-appropriate activities. Students learn to greet and extend good wishes to others, describe themselves and others, express likes and dislikes, ask and receive advice and information, use formal and informal speech, ask and give directions, tell time, make purchases, and express what they and other people do at home, at school, and during free time.

Grades Five and Six Spanish

In grades five and six, students learn to communicate in Spanish about a variety of topics and become familiar with many aspects of the Spanish-speaking world. Students study in more detail the countries of Spain and Mexico, learning about the language and culture of the people in these regions. Students are also exposed to the various cultures represented by Spanish-speaking Americans, with emphasis on the city of Miami, Florida.

Using the text series *Adelante* and its ancillary materials, instruction in Spanish includes listening, speaking, reading and writing in age-appropriate activities. Students learn to greet and extend good wishes to others, describe themselves and others, express likes and dislikes, ask and receive advice and information, use formal and informal speech, ask and give directions, tell time, make purchases, and express what they and other people do at home, at school, and during free time.

Health

The primary goal of the health education program at West Woods is to teach young adolescents how to stay well—how to assess their individual habits and behaviors in order to make informed choices that will positively affect their well-being. Students are exposed to a blend of scientific facts, current research, resources, assertive techniques, and other decision-making skills, which will help them develop the life skills necessary for a healthy, responsible, and productive future. In both grades, health instruction is integrated into the science program.

Grade Five Health

The primary focus in fifth grade health is on staying well. Students learn about the importance of daily physical activity and explore how media, culture, and family customs influence eating habits. They continue to learn ways to express a variety of emotions, to solve problems without conflict, to avoid situations that are dangerous, and to find help when needed. They learn where to get accurate information regarding sexuality and disease prevention and begin to acquire an understanding of puberty, including basic knowledge of the structure and function of the male and female anatomy. They also study the influence of the media on sexual norms and begin to learn about HIV/AIDS—an infectious and preventable disease that is currently incurable.

Refusal skills are an important topic in the fifth grade health curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes how media, popular culture, and peers influence the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, and students practice ways to say “no” to tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and other harmful situations. They also learn the difference between legal and illegal drugs and become aware of school rules and state laws pertaining to the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

Grade Six Health

The sixth grade health program builds on the skills learned in fifth grade. Topics addressed in sixth grade include emotions, effective social communication, defining sexual harassment, gateway drugs, and effective refusal skills. In the unit on nutrition, students learn about the importance of a balanced diet by studying the American dietary guidelines and the Food Guide Pyramid. As a culminating activity, they create a diet plan for a sixth grader that follows the Food Guide Pyramid and American dietary guidelines.

Technology

The goal of the technology program at West Woods is to create independent technology users who can select appropriate software tools for learning tasks, maintain and organize files, and behave in an ethical and responsible manner with regard to personal computers, networks, and the Internet. Technology skills are integrated into the curriculum across all content areas, and students in both grades five and six are exposed to software applications that enhance their technology competence as well as their knowledge and academic skills.

Grades Five and Six Technology

The technology program in grades five and six continues to develop and enhance students' basic technology skills in communication, information accessing, data analysis, and ethical and responsible use of technology services. Students in both grades will continue to improve their keyboarding skills in an effort to meet the goal of 25 w.p.m. with 85% accuracy. Technology is integrated into all content areas. For example, in language arts, students use word processing to improve process writing and begin to use a desktop publisher to design brochures and newsletters. In mathematics and science, students use spreadsheets to graph data from surveys and research as well as use audio, and multimedia tools to create oral presentations. Students also have opportunities to work with design and composition software in music and art.



Library/Media

The goal of the library/media program at West Woods is to prepare students to become effective, critical, and independent users of ideas and information. In grades five and six, students expand their knowledge of information materials and learn to access and use information from many sources. The library-media program also supports and enriches curriculum in all areas, fosters wide reading, and facilitates a lifelong appreciation for libraries.

Grade Five Library/Media

Students in grade five develop their information literacy skills through the “Big 6 Skills” approach. Through library instruction, students learn to communicate an understanding of the library’s organization in relationship to their information needs; to locate information on a given topic in variety of print, non-print, and internet resources; to identify the essential parts of a bibliographic entry as part of identifying sources used; and to paraphrase important facts and details. Information literacy instruction is integrated into curriculum units on Westward Expansion, Immigration, Industrial Revolution and Health. Book talks, author studies, and special reading programs continue the development of students’ recreational reading habits. Fifth grade students are expected to read silently from 20 to 30 minutes each day and to choose books from a variety of fiction and nonfiction subject areas.

Grade Six Library/Media

Students in grade six expand their skills in using the “Big 6 Information Problem Solving” approach. Through instruction and practice, they are expected to demonstrate an understanding of a library’s organization; develop a search strategy for the use of an encyclopedia, atlas, almanac, dictionary, library on-line catalog, on-line magazine database, and an internet web-site to effectively find relevant information; to summarize and paraphrase important facts and details; and to identify sources used and the essential parts of a bibliographic entry. In addition, sixth grade students are also expected to read silently from 20 to 30 minutes each day, to identify favorite authors, and to choose books from a variety of genre.

Visual Arts

The goal of the art program at West Woods is to improve student's artistic thinking through the development of production, perception, and reflection skills using various media and techniques. Students create artwork, learn to view and understand artwork, and learn to reflect on and evaluate artwork. In both grades five and six, students are assessed through the collection of work in a process folio, which is brought home at the end of the year. Student artistic experiences are also extended through after school clubs such as weaving and pottery.

Grade Five Art

The theme of the fifth grade visual arts program is "looking through new eyes." Throughout the year, students are guided through the use of various materials, the arts of various cultures, and the images of various artists to be more observant of details and to better understand the elements of art and the principles of design. Students explore representational, abstract and non-objective approaches to solving artistic problems such as Duane Hanson's use of everyday human experiences for representational sculpture and Van Gogh's emotional and abstracted use of color in portraits. Students are also exposed to other artists and art forms.

Grade Six Art

The theme of the art program in sixth grade is arts and technology. In sixth grade, students learn about the importance of technology and computer literacy as tools for personal expression and career options. They explore the creative potential of past and current technologies such as Leonardo Da Vinci's use of grids and linear perspective and M.C. Escher's tessellations. Through instruction and practice in traditional and current art-related technologies, students learn to create and communicate original ideas using a variety of art processes such as drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, paper construction, and computer generated images.



Music

The goal of the music program at West Woods is to encourage students to perform, create, and respond to various forms of music. Through active participation, students in grades five and six deepen their understanding of the elements of music and develop a foundation for lifelong music exploration. Students at West Woods may select from four strands of music—band, chorus, orchestra, and general music—and students have music three days in each four-day rotation. Co-curricular music offerings extend the music curriculum in both grades.

Grade Five and Six Music

In grades five and six, students may select band, chorus, orchestra, or general music. Students who wish to actively pursue performance in music may select **one or two of the performing groups (band, chorus, and orchestra.)** Students who wish to pursue a limited performance experience should select **only *General Music***.

Band – Study of a traditional band instrument begins in grade five and continues on a more advanced level in grade six. At the end of fourth grade, students who wish to participate in band select an instrument from the woodwind, brass or percussion family. Students receive instruction in Band during the mid-day block and in addition, have a half-hour weekly, small group lesson that takes place during the school day on a rotating basis.

Chorus – Students may elect to sing in chorus and will develop their vocal and instrumental music reading skills.

Orchestra – Orchestra at West Woods is a continuation of the string program that starts in each elementary school. In grades five and six, students may continue to study the violin, viola, cello, or string bass and perform in the West Woods Orchestra. Ensembles meet during the mid-day block, and lessons take place during the school day on a rotating basis. String students will continue to develop their ensemble and note reading skills in orchestra and develop advanced techniques on their instruments in lessons.

General Music – Students are exposed to a multi-faceted general music curriculum, which includes singing, music composition, music appreciation, theory, and the exploration of playing instruments.



Physical Education

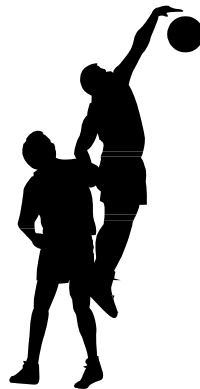
The physical education program at West Woods offers a structured sequence of learning experiences in both grades, which supports the development of a healthy lifestyle and related attitudes and dispositions. In fifth grade, students consolidate skills learned in the elementary grades and apply those skills to a wide variety of physical activities, and in sixth grade students deepen their understanding and application of basic and specialized movement skills. Fitness is a focus in both grades—understanding the importance of nutrition and cardiovascular fitness to maintaining good health. Students have physical education two days each week and in both grades, the intramural program is an extension of the physical education curriculum. Safety is of primary concern in all units.

Grade Five Physical Education

In fifth grade, students study aspects of cardiovascular fitness including the effects of nutrition and lower heart rates and the importance of a low resting pulse rate. They explore and improve personal fitness through increasingly complex games and group activities. In fifth grade, students also use their accumulated knowledge of movement and basic skills to participate in a wide variety of team sports such as flag football, soccer, volleyball, speedball, field hockey, basketball, softball, track and field, and gymnastics. Dance and cooperative adventure activities are also included in the program.

Grade Six Physical Education

In sixth grade, students continue to develop skills and movement concepts at increasingly sophisticated levels and apply those skills to a broader range of team and individual sports. Fitness is incorporated into every sixth grade unit, and students learn about resistance training, aerobic endurance, muscle strength, and flexibility as they improve their personal fitness. All students' fitness levels are assessed in the fall using the State of Connecticut Fitness Test.



Guidance

The guidance program at West Woods is a comprehensive developmental school counseling program, which aims to enhance student learning through three broad areas of development—academic, personal/social, and career. The guidance program includes preventative and proactive skill-building classroom activities in the academic, career, and personal/social domains. The guidance counselor meets with students both individually and in groups. At this time, guidance services at West Woods are primarily focused on the sixth grade.

Other services which the school counselor provides are: consultation with teachers, administrators, parents and community members; intervention with crises; referrals to community agencies; help with transition from grade four to five, grade five to six, and grade six to seven; and placement of students.

Special Education

Special education services are designed to support student achievement in the general education curriculum and to be incorporated as much as possible into the general education classroom. Children receive specialized instruction in general education classrooms and/or resource rooms by teachers who collaborate with one another at weekly team meetings. These teachers identify instructional strategies and modifications that may be necessary for students to attain the goals and objectives identified in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Class sizes are kept small to foster personal attention.

If a teacher recognizes that a student is experiencing difficulty in school, he or she may refer the child to the Student Intervention Team (SIT), a group of general education teachers who meet regularly to plan interventions for students. Through the SIT process, teachers work together to modify instruction, to consider alternative assessment methods, to develop behavior intervention strategies and other accommodations designed to enhance student learning. If students continue to have difficulty learning despite these adjustments to their programs, they may be referred to the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for consideration for special education.

The PPT may determine that a formal evaluation is warranted and, if necessary, may recommend special education services. All students who receive special education services have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) developed collaboratively by teachers, related services personnel, administrators, and parents. Goals and objectives are established and serve as a guide for specialized instruction. To the greatest extent possible, this instruction occurs in the general education classroom, where the teacher works directly or in collaboration with the special education teacher to implement appropriate instructional modifications. Sometimes students receive small group or individual instruction in a resource room, depending on their individual needs.

Special services team meetings are held weekly to discuss educational issues related to the unique academic needs of those students receiving special education services. The school psychologist, school social worker, guidance counselors, special education resource teachers, and assistant principal participate in these special services team meetings.

Related service personnel work with students, faculty, and parents to provide the necessary support services to maximize student learning opportunities at school. These support services generally include health services, counseling, community liaison work, evaluation, and recommendations that facilitate student adjustment.

The special education process is designed to be a collaborative process that takes advantage of the effort and expertise of all individuals who know and work with individual children. The goal of this collaborative team is to provide a successful school experience for all children.

Gifted

All students at West Woods are placed in heterogeneous (mixed ability) class groupings. The learning profiles of students who have been identified as academically gifted are reviewed in the fall by teacher teams, who then develop a plan to address the particular learning needs of each identified student within the context of the regular academic program. Interventions may include curriculum extensions and/or acceleration, curriculum compacting, and enrichment activities. Student plans are reviewed at each reporting period to ensure that plans continue to address student needs. The resource teacher for gifted students at West Woods works with teachers to support them in making modifications to student programs and may also meet with students periodically to support their growth and to provide opportunities for enrichment activities.

WEST WOODS UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is an important aspect of the learning process. Research confirms that there is a strong, positive correlation between extending learning time through consistent home study on well-designed assignments and school achievement.

Homework serves several important purposes:

1. It extends school learning by giving students the opportunity to prepare for instruction, to practice what has been taught, and to apply lessons to other materials.
2. It helps students develop responsibility by completing independent assignments at home and returning them to school on time.

Homework assignments should be purposeful and meaningful, and provide an opportunity for students to enhance their skills, to express concepts, to practice lessons learned in school, and to broaden and/or deepen their understanding of subject matter. Difficult or new work should be reserved for the classroom, with sufficient time allotted for explanation and reinforcement. A balance of long and short-term assignments should be offered to all students and where appropriate, homework should be tailored to the needs, levels, and interests of students. Homework should not be assigned as “busy” work or punishment.

Homework is intended to assist students in developing independent work habits. It is the student’s responsibility; parents should only see that it gets done. For students, homework provides an opportunity to establish a system of organizing materials, bringing them home, doing the assignment, and returning it to school on time. It is not expected that students will complete homework in school, and it is expected that both fifth and sixth graders will use a planner to support homework completion.

Teachers will assign homework regularly in each major content area, distributed across subjects each school night, and homework will be collected, corrected, and returned in a timely fashion. Teachers will be available to students after school for extra help with assignments, as needed.

The Farmington Board of Education policy on homework recommends about one hour daily in grade five and grade six. It is also expected that students will read independently at home each night for 20-30 minutes.